

Message Text

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY JIDDA IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 032225

FOR THE AMBASSADOR

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: OVIP (SIMON, WILLIAM)

SUBJECT: TRAVEL OF SECRETARY SIMON

REF: JIDDA 949

1. PLEASE CALL ON APPROPRIATE SAG OFFICIAL TO CONVEY
FOLLOWING MESSAGE IN RESPONSE TO SAG REQUEST FOR POST-
PONEMENT OF SIMON VISIT.

2. SECRETARY SIMON IS FULLY APPRECIATIVE OF PROBLEMS SAG
FACES IN RECEIVING LARGE NUMBER OF SENIOR FOREIGN OFFICIALS
AND HAS REVIEWED HIS PROPOSED PLANS FOR TRAVEL TO THE
MIDDLE EAST IN THAT LIGHT. HE HAS CONCLUDED THAT IT WOULD
BE EXTREMELY DIFFICULT TO RESTRUCTURE THE ENTIRE TRIP SO AS
TO MEET SAG DESIRES FOR VISIT IN APRIL. THE PROPOSED VISIT
TO SAUDI ARABIA ON MARCH 2-4 HAS AS ITS CENTRAL PURPOSE
THE MEETING OF THE U.S.-SAUDI JOINT ECONOMIC COMMISSION,
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ON WHICH WE PLACE VERY HIGH IMPORTANCE, AND THE SAUDI STOP

IS THEREFORE THE CENTRAL POINT OF THE SECRETARY'S ENTIRE TRAVEL TO THE MIDDLE EAST. AROUND THE STOP IN SAUDI ARABIA, HOWEVER, VISITS HAVE ALSO BEEN SCHEDULED TO FOUR OTHER MIDDLE EASTERN COUNTRIES. SCHEDULES OF CALLS AND OTHER

ACTIVITIES AT THOSE OTHER STOPS ARE ALREADY FAR ALONG. CANCELLATION OF VISIT TO SAUDI ARABIA, WHICH WOULD FALL IN THE MIDDLE OF THE ENTIRE MIDDLE EAST TRIP, WOULD THUS INVOLVE DISRUPTING ENTIRE TRAVEL SCHEDULE WITH CONSEQUENT INCONVENIENCE TO HIGH OFFICIALS IN ALL THE COUNTRIES CONCERNED.

3. SECRETARY SIMON IS PARTICULARLY REGRETFUL THAT PROPOSED MARCH 2-4 VISIT HAS CREATED A PROBLEM BECAUSE WE HAD BEEN OPERATING ON ASSUMPTION THAT THESE DATES WERE SATISFACTORY AND THAT TOTAL VISIT OF LESS THAN 48 HOURS IN SAUDI ARABIA WOULD PERMIT CALLS ON A SMALL NUMBER OF HIGHEST SAG OFFICIALS IN ADDITION TO JOINT COMMISSION MEETING WHILE NOT PLACING EXCESSIVE DEMANDS ON SAG.

4. SECRETARY SIMON HAS NO RPT NO DESIRE TO QUESTION A DECISION BY THE SAG ON WHETHER THE MARCH 2-4 VISIT IS APPROPRIATE OR INAPPROPRIATE. SUCH DECISION IS, OF COURSE, ENTIRELY FOR SAG TO MAKE, AND SECRETARY SIMON IS PREPARED TO DO HIS BEST TO RESCHEDULE THE VISIT FOR A LATER MONTH. (HIS SCHEDULE AND AVAILABILITY ARE UNCERTAIN AT THIS MOMENT.) HOWEVER, THE SECRETARY WOULD BE MOST GRATEFUL IF THE SAG WOULD REVIEW THE POSSIBILITIES OF RECEIVING HIM ON MARCH 2-4, AS EARLIER PROPOSED, IN LIGHT OF THE POINTS CONVEYED ABOVE--PARTICULARLY THE DISRUPTION WHICH WOULD BE CAUSED TO THE SECRETARY'S PLANS TO STOP IN SEVERAL OTHER MIDDLE EAST COUNTRIES IF THE SAUDI VISIT IS POSTPONED, OR EVEN THE POSSIBLE CANCELLATION OF THE ENTIRE TRIP IF VISIT TO SAUDI ARABIA NOT FEASIBLE IN TIMEFRAME INDICATED.

5. BEGIN FYI: WE CLEARLY WOULD LIKE TO HAVE SAG FIND IT POSSIBLE TO CHANGE ITS MIND ON RECEIVING SECRETARY SIMON ON MARCH 2-4. WE DO NOT, HOWEVER, WISH TO APPEAR IN ANY WAY INSISTENT, AND YOU SHOULD FEEL ENTIRELY FREE TO USE CONFIDENTIAL

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YOUR JUDGMENT AS TO HOW FAR TO PRESS FOR A FAVORABLE RECONSIDERATION. END FYI. INGERSOLL

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